

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-45, and please add claims 46-100. The following is a complete listing of the claims pending in the application, as amended:

Claims 1 – 45. (Canceled)

46. (New) An apparatus for counting coins comprising:

an input region configured to receive a plurality of randomly oriented coins from a user;

a user interface configured to receive a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product;

a coin discriminator configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region, the coin discriminator being configured to discriminate between acceptable coins and unacceptable coins;

at least one coin receptacle configured to receive at least a portion of the acceptable coins from the coin discriminator; and

a communications facility configured to transmit information from the coin counting apparatus to a remote computer, wherein the information is related to a status of the coin receptacle.

47. (New) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the communications facility is configured to transmit a signal to the remote computer when the coin receptacle is at least generally full of acceptable coins.

48. (New) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the communications facility is configured to transmit a signal to the remote computer when the coin receptacle is at least generally full of acceptable coins, and wherein the signal causes a person to empty the coin receptacle.

49. (New) The apparatus of claim 46, further comprising a tray configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region and transfer the

portion of coins to the coin discriminator, wherein the tray includes at least one hole configured to separate non-coin items from the portion of coins.

50. (New) The apparatus of claim 46, further comprising an inclined tray configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region and transfer the portion of coins to the coin discriminator, wherein the inclined tray includes at least one hole configured to separate non-coin material from the portion of coins.

51. (New) The apparatus of claim 46, further comprising a vibrating coin feeder configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region and transfer the portion of coins to the coin discriminator.

52. (New) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the communications facility includes a modem.

53. (New) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the communications facility includes a local area network.

54. (New) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the communications facility includes a wireless communication system.

55. (New) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the communications facility includes a video communication system.

56. (New) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the remote computer is a portable computer at least temporarily connected to the apparatus for counting coins.

57. (New) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the communications facility is configured to transmit information to the remote computer relating to an access to the coin receptacle.

58. (New) A method for counting coins in a coin counting machine, the method comprising:

receiving a plurality of randomly oriented coins in an input region of the coin counting machine;
receiving a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product;
discriminating at least a portion of the received coins with the coin discriminator to distinguish acceptable coins from unacceptable coins;
transferring at least a portion of the acceptable coins to a coin receptacle; and
communicating information from the coin counting machine to a central computer, wherein the communicated information is related to a status of the coin receptacle.

59. (New) The method of claim 58 wherein communicating information from the coin counting machine includes transmitting a signal when the coin receptacle is at least generally full of acceptable coins.

60. (New) The method of claim 58, further comprising dispensing a redeemable voucher for an amount related to the acceptable coins.

61. (New) The method of claim 58, further comprising:
positioning the coin counting machine in a non-bank retail location; and
dispensing a redeemable voucher for an amount related to the acceptable coins, wherein the voucher is redeemable at a point of sale in the retail location in exchange for products sold in the retail location.

62. (New) The method of claim 58, further comprising dispatching a person to empty the coin receptacle in response to receiving the information communicated to the central computer.

63. (New) An apparatus for counting coins comprising:

an input region configured to receive a plurality of randomly oriented coins from a user;

a user interface configured to receive a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product;

a coin discriminator configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region, the coin discriminator being configured to discriminate between acceptable coins and unacceptable coins;

at least one coin receptacle configured to receive at least a portion of the acceptable coins from the coin discriminator; and

a communications facility configured to transmit information from the coin counting apparatus to a central computer in the event of a malfunction of at least a portion of the apparatus for counting coins.

64. (New) The apparatus of claim 63, wherein the information transmitted from the communications facility is associated with a malfunction in at least one of the input region, the coin discriminator, and the coin receptacle.

65. (New) The apparatus of claim 63 wherein the information transmitted from the communications facility is associated with a jam of one or more of the plurality of coins received by the input region.

66. (New) The apparatus of claim 63, further comprising a printer configured to print the redeemable voucher on printer paper, wherein the information transmitted from the coin counting machine includes a signal related to the status of the printer paper.

67. (New) The apparatus of claim 63, further comprising an inclined tray configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region and transfer the portion of coins to the coin discriminator, wherein the inclined tray includes at least one hole configured to separate non-coin material from the portion of coins.

68. (New) The apparatus of claim 63, further comprising a vibrating coin feeder configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region and transfer the portion of coins to the coin discriminator.

69. (New) A method for counting coins in a coin counting machine, the method comprising:

receiving a plurality of randomly oriented coins in an input region of the coin counting machine;

receiving a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product;

transferring at least a portion of the received coins to a coin discriminator;

discriminating at least a portion of the received coins with the coin discriminator to distinguish acceptable coins from unacceptable coins;

transferring at least a portion of the acceptable coins to a coin receptacle; and

communicating information from the coin counting machine to a central computer in the event of a malfunction of at least a portion of the coin counting apparatus.

70. (New) The method of claim 69 wherein the information communicated from the coin counting machine is associated with a malfunction in at least one of the input region, the coin discriminator, and the coin receptacle.

71. (New) The method of claim 69, further comprising:

positioning the coin counting machine in a non-bank retail location; and

dispensing a redeemable voucher for an amount related to the acceptable coins, wherein the voucher is redeemable at a point of sale in the retail location in exchange for products sold in the retail location.

72. (New) The method of claim 69, further comprising dispatching a person to remedy the malfunction in response to receiving the information communicated to the central computer.

73. (New) An apparatus for counting coins comprising:
an input region configured to receive a plurality of randomly oriented coins from a user;
a user interface configured to receive a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product;
a coin discriminator configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region, the coin discriminator being configured to discriminate between acceptable coins and unacceptable coins;
a voucher dispenser configured to dispense the redeemable voucher; and
a communications facility configured to transmit information from the coin counting apparatus to a central computer, wherein the information is related to the redeemable voucher.

74. (New) The apparatus of claim 73 wherein the information transmitted from the coin counting apparatus by the communications facility includes information usable to verify the authenticity of the redeemable voucher.

75. (New) The apparatus of claim 73 wherein the information transmitted from the coin counting apparatus by the communications facility includes information related to a plurality of transactions performed by the coin counting apparatus.

76. (New) The apparatus of claim 73 wherein the voucher dispenser is configured to dispense a voucher that is redeemable at a point of sale in a non-bank retail location in exchange for products sold at the retail location.

77. (New) An apparatus for counting coins comprising:
an input region configured to receive a plurality of randomly oriented coins from a user;
a vibrating coin feeder configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region;

- a coin discriminator configured to receive the portion of coins from the vibrating coin feeder, the coin discriminator being configured to identify acceptable coins;
- at least one coin receptacle configured to receive at least a portion of the acceptable coins from the coin discriminator; and
- a communications facility configured to transmit information from the coin counting apparatus to a remote computer, wherein the information is related to the amount of coins in the coin receptacle.

78. (New) The apparatus of claim 77, further comprising a user interface configured to receive a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product.

79. (New) The apparatus of claim 77 wherein the communications facility is configured to transmit a signal to the central computer when the coin receptacle is at least generally full of acceptable coins.

80. (New) The apparatus of claim 77 further comprising a voucher dispenser configured to dispense a voucher that is redeemable at a point of sale in a non-bank retail location in exchange for products sold at the retail location.

81. (New) An apparatus for counting coins comprising:
an input region configured to receive a plurality of randomly oriented coins from a user;
a vibrating coin feeder configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region; and
a coin discriminator configured to receive the portion of coins from the vibrating coin feeder, the coin discriminator being configured to discriminate between acceptable coins and unacceptable coins.

82. (New) The apparatus of claim 81, further comprising a user interface configured to receive a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product.

83. (New) The apparatus of claim 81 wherein the coin discriminator is configured to determine a total of the acceptable coins, and wherein the apparatus further comprises a voucher dispenser configured to dispense a redeemable voucher for a value related to the total.

84. (New) The apparatus of claim 81 further comprising a voucher dispenser configured to dispense a voucher that is redeemable at a point of sale in a non-bank retail location in exchange for products sold at the retail location.

85. (New) A system for counting coins in a coin counting machine, the system comprising:

- means for receiving a plurality of randomly oriented coins in an input region of the coin counting machine;

- means for receiving a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product;

- means for discriminating at least a portion of the received coins with the coin discriminator to distinguish acceptable coins from unacceptable coins;

- means for transferring at least a portion of the acceptable coins to a coin receptacle; and

- means for communicating information from the coin counting machine to a central computer, wherein the communicated information is related to a status of the coin receptacle.

86. (New) The system of claim 85 wherein the means for communicating information from the coin counting machine includes means for transmitting a signal when the coin receptacle is at least generally full of acceptable coins.

87. (New) The system of claim 85, further comprising means for dispensing a redeemable voucher for an amount related to the acceptable coins.

88. (New) The method of claim 85, further comprising means for dispatching a person to empty the coin receptacle in response to receiving the information communicated to the central computer.

89. (New) An apparatus for counting coins comprising:
an input region configured to receive a plurality of randomly oriented coins from a user;
a user interface configured to receive a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product;
a coin discriminator configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region, the coin discriminator being configured to identify acceptable coins and determine a total of the acceptable coins comprising two or more denominations;
at least one coin receptacle configured to receive at least a portion of the acceptable coins from the coin discriminator; and
a communications facility configured to transmit information from the coin counting apparatus to a remote computer, wherein the information is related to the coin counting apparatus.

90. (New) The apparatus of claim 89 wherein the communications facility is configured to transmit information to the remote computer relating to access to an interior portion of the apparatus for counting coins.

91. (New) The apparatus of claim 89 wherein the communications facility is further configured to receive information from an external source.

92. (New) The apparatus of claim 91 wherein the received information includes at least one of promotional information, coupon information, audio displays, and video displays.

93. (New) The apparatus of claim 91 wherein the received information includes at least one of modifications and upgrades to computer readable media controlling operation of the apparatus for counting coins.

94. (New) The apparatus of claim 91 wherein the received information includes computer readable instructions for controlling operation of the apparatus for counting coins.

95. (New) The apparatus of claim 89 wherein the communications facility is configured to transmit statistical information to the remote computer relating to customer usage of the apparatus for counting coins.

96. (New) The apparatus of claim 89, further comprising a memory for storing information relating to transactions carried out by the apparatus for counting coins.

97. (New) The apparatus of claim 89 wherein the user interface is further configured to receive voice recognition input from a user, and wherein the communications facility is configured to transmit information relating to the voice recognition input to the remote computer.

98. (New) The apparatus of claim 89 wherein the user interface is further configured to receive handwriting recognition input from a user, and wherein the communications facility is configured to transmit information relating to the handwriting recognition input to the remote computer.

99. (New) An apparatus for counting coins comprising:

an input region configured to receive a plurality of randomly oriented coins from a user including coins of two or more denominations;
a user interface configured to receive a request for a redeemable voucher in the absence of a selection of a product;
a coin discriminator configured to receive at least a portion of the plurality of coins from the input region, the coin discriminator being configured to identify acceptable coins and determine a total comprising two or more denominations;
at least one coin receptacle configured to receive at least a portion of the acceptable coins from the coin discriminator; and
a communications facility configured to transmit information from the coin counting apparatus to a non-bank central computer, wherein the information is related to any one of status of the coin receptacle, operating status of the coin counting apparatus, verification of a voucher, and an amount of acceptable coins counted.

100. (New) The apparatus of claim 99 wherein the coin receptacle is releasably secured to prevent access from a user of the apparatus for counting coins.